

Anubhavamrita by Sant Jnanadev

Its history, context in which it was composed, and it's summary

Ref: AI Overview:

The **Amritanubhava** (also spelled *Amrutanubhav* or *Anubhavamrita*), written by the 13th-century Marathi saint and philosopher **Sant Jnanadev** (also known as Dnyaneshwar or Jnaneshvara), is a monumental work of Indian philosophy and Marathi literature. Written around 1292 CE, it is a profound treatise on non-dualism (Advaita Vedanta) that focuses on the direct experience of self-realization rather than just theoretical knowledge.

Here is a detailed overview of the Anubhavamrita based on the provided search results:

Core Philosophy: *Chidvilas*

- **Non-Dualism:** The central theme of *Amritanubhava* is Advaita, but it goes beyond traditional, restrictive interpretations. Jnanadev presents the theory of **Chidvilas** (play of consciousness), maintaining that the entire universe is an expression of the Absolute Reality.
- **Beyond Duality:** The text dispels the duality between the inner divinity and the individual human soul.
- **The Nature of Reality:** It explains that Shiva and Shakti (the conscious and energetic aspects of reality) are inseparable, like a flower and its fragrance or the sun and its light.
- **Beyond Illusion (Maya):** While acknowledging the concept of *Maya* (illusion), Jnanadev's approach is more inclusive, seeing the world as a manifestation of the Divine rather than merely a false illusion.

Structure and Composition

- **Content:** The work consists of **10 chapters** containing approximately **806 Ovis** (a Marathi poetic metre).
- **Origin:** It was composed at the behest of his Guru and elder brother, Nivrattinath, to document his personal spiritual experiences.

- **Significance:** It is considered the first, or among the very first, philosophical works written in the Marathi language, aimed at making profound knowledge accessible, although its deep content requires contemplation.

Key Themes and Teachings

- **The Experience of Bliss:** The title translates to "The Nectar of Experience" or "Immortal Experience," focusing on the joy of daily living and the inner bliss of the Self.
- **The Limitations of Words:** Jnanadev emphasizes that true spiritual experience is beyond the capacity of words to describe.
- **Natural Devotion (Akritrim Bhakti):** He describes a state of devotion that is natural and inherent, born of knowledge, rather than superficial rituals.
- **Refutation of Heresy:** The text serves as a philosophical, and sometimes humorous, answer to those who held narrow views about the Supreme Reality.

Context

- **Author:** Jnanadev (1275–1296) was a saint, poet, and yogi of the Nath and Varkari traditions, who lived for only 21 years.
- **Context:** It was written after his more famous work, the *Dnyaneshwari* (a commentary on the Bhagavad Gita).
- **Impact:** The *Amritanubhava* has been highly regarded for centuries, with, for example, a famous commentary written by Saint Ekanatha.

The text is considered a spiritual manual for, as described by Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi, understanding the state of consciousness that occurs after self-realization.

The Anubhavamrita (also known as Amritanubhava), composed by the 13th-century philosopher-saint Sant Jnanadev (also known as Dnyaneshwar), is one of the most profound works of Indian philosophy. Unlike his other masterpiece, the Jnaneshwari—which is a commentary on the Bhagavad Gita—the Anubhavamrita is an original, independent philosophical treatise.

Below is an overview of its history, context, and a chapter-wise summary.

1. History and Context

The Historical Setting

Sant Jnanadev lived during the Yadava Dynasty in Maharashtra (c. 1275–1296 CE), a time when the region was politically stable but socially rigid. Religious knowledge was locked in Sanskrit, inaccessible to the common masses. Jnanadev, along with his siblings (Nivruttinath, Sopandev, and Muktabai), faced severe social persecution because their father had returned to householder life after being a Sannyasin (renunciate), which was considered a religious taboo.

The Occasion of Composition

After completing the Jnaneshwari at the age of 15, Jnanadev's elder brother and Guru, Nivruttinath, suggested that he write an independent work. **While the Jnaneshwari followed the structure of the Gita, Nivruttinath wanted Jnanadev to record his own direct experience of the Absolute.**

The title Anubhavamrita literally means "The Nectar of Experience" (Anubhava = Experience, Amrita = Nectar/Immortality). It represents the "Experience of Immortality" or the "Nectar of Self-realization."

2. Philosophical Framework: Chidvilasvada

The Anubhavamrita is unique because it departs from the traditional Mayavada (the theory that the world is an illusion) of Adi Shankara. Instead, Jnanadev proposes Chidvilasvada:

- * **The Theory of Divine Play:** Jnanadev argues that the world is not a false illusion (Maya) but a manifestation of the joy of the Ultimate Reality (Brahman).

- * **Non-Dual Devotion:** He suggests that the relationship between God and the devotee is like the relationship between the sun and its light—they are one and the same.

3. Summary of the Text (Chapter-wise)

The work consists of ten chapters and approximately 807 verses (Ovis).

Chapters 1-2: The Union of Shiva and Shakti

Jnanadev begins by describing the Ultimate Reality as a divine couple: Shiva (The Self) and Shakti (The Power).

- * He uses the metaphor of a husband and wife who are so inseparable that one cannot exist without the other.

- * **Summary:** The world is the "sport" or "vibration" of this unified consciousness. Shiva is the light, and Shakti is the radiance; they are distinct yet identical.

Chapters 3-4: Refutation of Ignorance (Ajnana)

These are the most logically intense sections of the book.

* Jnanadev argues that "Ignorance" (Ajnana) does not actually exist. If the world is a manifestation of pure knowledge, where is the room for ignorance?

* **Summary:** He dismisses the idea that one must "destroy" ignorance to find God. Since God is everywhere, ignorance is a myth.

Chapter 5: The Refutation of the Word (Shabda-Khandana)

Here, Jnanadev analyzes the role of language.

* He argues that words are like a "lamp" that is useful in the dark, but once the sun (Self-realization) rises, the lamp is unnecessary.

* **Summary:** Words can point toward the Truth, but the Truth itself is beyond description.

Chapters 6-7: The Nature of the Self and Pure Intelligence

Jnanadev describes the "Sat-Chit-Ananda" (Truth-Consciousness-Bliss) nature of the Absolute.

* He explains that the Self is self-luminous. It does not need another light to be seen.

* **Summary:** The world is simply the "Self" looking at "itself."

Chapter 8: The Secret of Devotion (Bhakti)

This is often considered the heart of the book. Jnanadev describes "Akritima Bhakti" (Natural/Unconditioned Devotion).

* Even after a person realizes they are one with God, devotion continues as a natural expression of love, similar to how a person enjoys their own shadow or a reflection.

* **Summary:** True devotion is not a means to an end; it is the natural state of a realized soul.

Chapters 9-10: The Culmination of Experience

Jnanadev concludes by describing the state of a Jivanmukta (one who is liberated while still alive).

* He explains that his words are not just philosophy but are the very "Amrita" (Nectar) that he has tasted.

* **Summary:** He offers this work as a "feast" for seekers, inviting them to share in the nectar of his experience.

4. Significance and Legacy

The Anubhavamrita is regarded as the "Crest-Jewel" of Marathi literature. Its significance lies in:

* Originality: It does not rely on scriptural authority (Shruti) but on personal experience.

* Synthesis: It blends the high philosophy of the Upanishads with the warmth of the Bhakti movement.

* Language: It proved that the Marathi language was capable of expressing the deepest metaphysical truths, previously reserved for Sanskrit.

> "As the sun is the cause of the day, but the day and the sun are not two different things; so the Self is the cause of the world, but the Self and the world are one." — A core sentiment of Anubhavamrita.

In the Anubhavamrita, Sant Jnanadev presents a philosophy that is both intellectually rigorous and deeply emotional. To understand why **Chapter 8 (or Chapter 9 in some numbering systems, titled "The Secret of Natural Devotion") is the heart of the book**, we must look at how it bridges the gap between cold logic and the warmth of love.

1. Chapter 8: The Secret of Akritima Bhakti (Natural Devotion)

In traditional philosophy, devotion (Bhakti) is often seen as a ladder to reach the Absolute. Once you reach the top (liberation), you "throw away the ladder." Jnanadev completely rejects this. He argues that Bhakti is not a tool; it is the very nature of the Absolute.

The Concept of "Natural" Devotion

Jnanadev calls this Akritima Bhakti (non-artificial or spontaneous devotion). He uses stunning metaphors to explain how one can be "in devotion" even after becoming one with God:

- * The Ocean and the Waves: Even though a wave is nothing but the ocean, it still "plays" on the bosom of the ocean. This play is devotion.

- * The Sun and its Radiance: The sun's light is not different from the sun, yet it spreads out. This "spreading" is the sun's devotion to itself.

- * The Rock-cut Temple: If a temple, the deity inside, and the worshiper are all carved out of a single rock, is there any real "duality"? No. Yet, the "form" of worship exists.

Why it is the "Heart" of the Book

This chapter is the heart because it resolves the tension between Knowledge (Jnana) and Love (Bhakti). For Jnanadev, the highest state of realization is not a silent, frozen state of "nothingness," but a vibrant, overflowing state of "Self-Love." He suggests that God (the Self) became the many (the world) simply because He was "lonely" and wanted to enjoy His own beauty through the eyes of a devotee.

2. Jnanadev vs. Adi Shankara (Advaita)

While both Jnanadev and Adi Shankara are Advaitins (Non-dualists), they differ significantly in their "mood" and their explanation of the world.

Comparison: Mayavada vs. Chidvilasvada

To understand the difference, consider the famous "Rope and Snake" metaphor used in Advaita:

- * **Shankara says:** When you see a snake in the dark but then bring a light, you realize it was just a rope. The snake was a lie; only the rope is true.

- * **Jnanadev says:** Even if it's a rope, the fact that it appeared as a snake is a beautiful manifestation of the rope's potential. The "appearance" is not a "lie" to be hated, but a "play" to be admired.

The Resulting Outlook

- * Shankara's Advaita leads to Asceticism (Nivritti). It emphasizes that "I am not this body, I am not this world."

* Jnanadev's Advaita leads to Affirmation (Amritanubhava). It emphasizes that "I am the hand that gives, and I am the hand that receives." It is a philosophy of Divine Joy.

Here are a few pivotal verses from Chapter 8 (The Secret of Natural Devotion). In these Ovis (a specific Marathi poetic meter), Jnanadev uses everyday imagery to explain how non-duality and devotion coexist.

Selected Verses from Chapter 8

> Marathi: पाहिजे तेथ जेवीं। आपणापुढे आपणों ठेवीं।

> तेवीं भक्तीची पदवी। अनुभवे पां ॥

> Translation: Just as one might place oneself before oneself (as in a mirror), so is the status of this devotion—it is known only through direct experience.

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> Marathi: म्हणोनि देवो भक्तां भेटे। तें न मोडतां एकपण फिटे।

> जेवीं दर्पणीं आपणों पाहाटे। देखणेपणें ॥

> Translation: Therefore, when God meets the devotee, their "Oneness" is not broken. It is like a person looking at himself in a mirror; the "seer" and the "seen" are the same person.

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> Marathi: आतां भक्तु आणि देवो। या दोनही शब्दांचा वावो।

> जें अभेदीही अनुभवो। लोणें जेथ ॥

> Translation: Now, the words "Devotee" and "God" are merely empty sounds. Because in this state of non-duality, the experience of love is like salt dissolving in water—completely merged.

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Analysis of the "Natural Devotion" Argument

Jnanadev's argument in these verses is revolutionary. He is answering a common critique: "If I am God, whom should I worship?"

1. The Mirror Logic

Jnanadev explains that God is so full of love that He splits Himself into "Subject" and "Object" just to enjoy a relationship. A person looking in a mirror knows there aren't actually two people, but they still enjoy the act of looking. Similarly, the Sage knows they are one with the Divine, but they still perform rituals and sing praises because it is the "Sport of the Soul."

2. Beyond Words

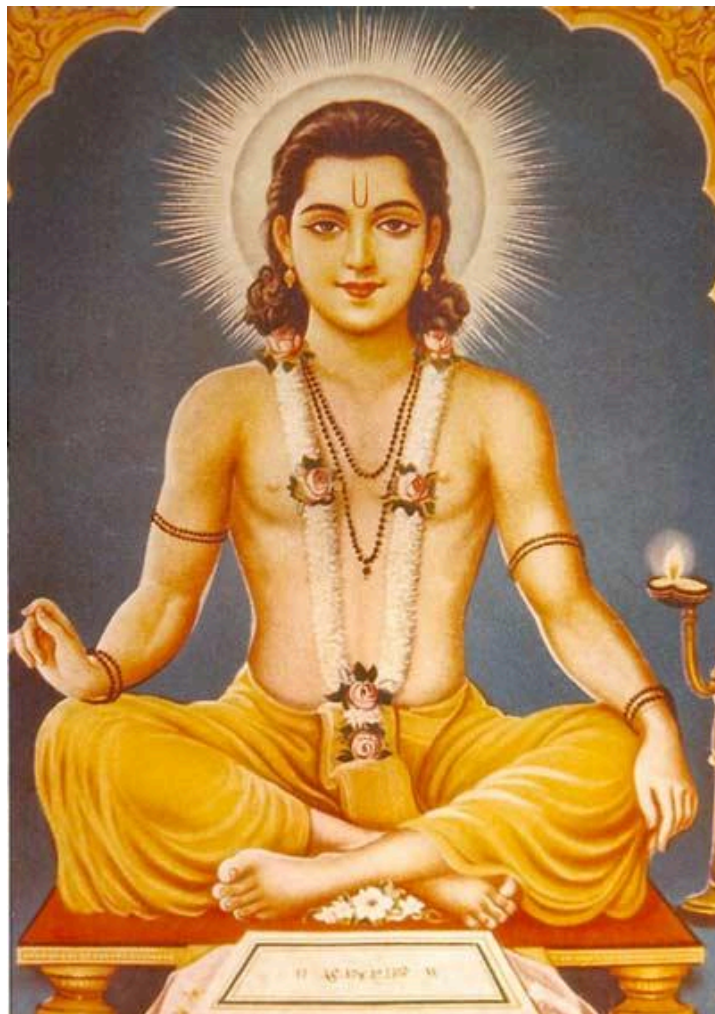
In the third verse quoted above, he admits that even the language of "Bhakti" is a limitation. He describes a state where the "salt" (the individual) has dissolved into the "ocean" (the Divine). Even though the salt is gone as a separate entity, the entire ocean now tastes salty. This "saltiness" is what he calls the Anubhavamrita—the nectar of experience.

Summary Comparison: Jnanadev vs. Shankara

Feature	Shankara's Path (The Desert)	Jnanadev's Path (The Garden)
View of the World	A mirage to be transcended.	A garden to be enjoyed as God's form.
Ultimate State	Silent, motionless Peace (<i>Shanti</i>).	Dynamic, vibrating Joy (<i>Vilas</i>).
The "I"	Must be annihilated.	Is expanded until it includes everything.

Jnanadev's Anubhavamrita is often preferred by those who find Shankara's "world-is-an-illusion" theory too dry or detached. Jnanadev offers a "Positive Monism." He tells the seeker that they don't have to run away to a cave to find God; they can find God in the very act of seeing, hearing, and loving, because those acts are themselves the "vibrations" of the Absolute.

Photo:





YouTube Videos

All pervading Shiva Shakti by Jnaneshear from Amritanunhav (15 min):

<https://youtu.be/o5haiwHLXAE?si=0iCtDMrvfPO41zE>

Sant Jnaneshear - Amritanubhava - Tamil (13 min);

<https://youtu.be/fnkA0T4PR9k?si=3abcbtgWLwQvOyUE>

Sant Jnaneshear - Amritanunhav (9 min):

<https://youtu.be/IN9uxZ1zX-U?si=rIO7-DhUxo6PV9pc>

Anubhavamrita - English Translation (3 hrs 21 min);

<https://youtu.be/n8oiOuW0vO4?si=s-POf4KQdAAwRzee>

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